



# MARAD Update



Official Journal of the Maritime Administration

Vol. 4, Issues 9 &amp; 10

## Message from the Deputy Maritime Administrator

The Maritime Administration's staff's response to the overwhelming disasters wrought by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita has been efficient, levelheaded, and thorough. As such, MARAD moved quickly to actively support relief and recovery efforts in the regions affected by the storms.

The unprecedented and historical deployment of MARAD's Ready Reserve Force (RRF) marks the first time that the RRF has been activated to assist in recovery from domestic disasters. The *Cape Knox*, *Cape Kennedy*, *Diamond State*, and *Wright* offered assistance after Hurricane Katrina by providing supporting facilities and a temporary home for Port of New Orleans personnel, while the *Cape Victory* and *Cape Vincent* stood firm during Hurricane Rita by providing housing for emergency-response personnel and equipment for the city of Beaumont and surrounding areas.

Headquarters and Region staff activated the Ready Reserve Force ships and training ships in an expeditious manner, and I applaud their efforts. I am especially moved by the work of our people in the Central Region, many of whom were displaced from their own homes, who nonetheless tended selflessly to the work of the Agency and the nation. Information about conditions in the Gulf Coast was at a premium during this time of confusion, and we at MARAD responded quickly to our colleagues at DOT, to industry, and to the American people.

MARAD's people have shown their outstanding abilities and devotion to duty at a time when it counted.

I am proud to be associated with all of you. Congratulations on a job well done.

John Jamian

### IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Message from the Deputy Maritime Administrator</i>	Cover	<i>First Day Back</i>	6
<i>Preparing for a Category 5 Hurricane</i>	2	<i>Empire State Deployed to Support Gulf Coast Recovery Operations</i>	7
<i>Noah's Arks</i>	3	<i>Images from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita</i>	8
<i>Sec. Mineta Visits RRF Ship in NOLA</i>	4		

## ***Preparing for a Category 5 Hurricane***

**By Jean Barile, Office of Ship Operations**

As the nation prepared for a Category 5 hurricane named Katrina, little did the Maritime Administration (MARAD) know the extent to which our people and our ships would be involved. Before the first wind gusts blew, MARAD managers gave Central Region employees administrative leave to take their families and seek shelter. Crews on MARAD's Ready Reserve Force (RRF) ships *Cape Kennedy* and *Cape Knox* "battened down the hatches"; they doubled mooring lines, secured decks from flying objects, and prepared to take aboard a few stranded evacuees from the impending hurricane.

Before the last raindrops fell, MARAD managers were already trying to assess the status of MARAD employees from the Central Region and the Beaumont Reserve Fleet (BRF), as well as RRF vessels, and the Port of New Orleans.

Our own colleagues were our first concern, and MARAD provided guidance to take care of immediate shelter and work concerns. Headquarters staff created websites to assist MARAD employees affected by the Katrina disaster, as well as those MARAD employees assisting with Katrina relief efforts. Headquarters provided a central call-in number for any employee trying to notify supervisors or co-workers of their location and status. After one week, only one employee was



***Part of MARAD Headquarters Hurricane Katrina Hurricane Relief and Recovery Efforts Team with Deputy Maritime Administrator John Jamian (front row: center).***

unaccounted for, and within another three days, that employee checked in. MARAD employees were a microcosm of the coastal gulf area.

Eighteen mooring lines broke on the *Cape Kennedy* and *Cape Knox*, and the ships shifted more than 200 feet down the Mississippi River. All in all, the ships rode out the weather in reasonably good condition. They had electricity (air conditioning and lights), food, water, and berths. Without being asked, vessel captains provided hot showers, meals, and a few moments of rest to emergency-response personnel, including local fire and rescue responders, within the Poland Street complex.

Port of New Orleans Director Larry LaGrange requested MARAD's assistance through FEMA to provide vessels for berthing to accommodate approximately 3,000 personnel who were anticipated to return to the area to open the Port of New Orleans. Vessels with the optimum berthing capacity included MARAD school ships. MARAD notified general agents to commence the activation and preparation for sail of the Training Ship *State of Maine*, the Training Ship *Empire State*, and the future Training Ship *Sirius*.

*Continued on Page 5*



## Noah's Arks

By CDR Ralph J. Ortolano, Jr., USN (RC)  
MMROCH Unit 420

Two U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) Ready Reserve Force (RRF) ships, the *Cape Victory* and *Cape Vincent*, homeported in Beaumont, Texas, assumed the role of Noah's Arks for the emergency agencies of Jefferson County, Texas, as they weathered Hurricane Rita and her 14-foot storm surge.

Faced with potential force-five hurricane winds, devastating flooding, and highways across the region clogged by one of the largest mass evacuations in American history, Jefferson County officials were in a quandary.

If emergency-response personnel drove their most critical first-response vehicles to higher ground within range of where they would be most needed, they might still be damaged by severe winds. If they moved their fleets of police and fire trucks further inland where winds would be less strong, they might face miles of roads blocked by fallen trees and power lines, hampering response after the storm.

Early Thursday, September 22, MARAD officials and Beaumont Mayor Guy Goodson hatched a plan to use two MARAD RRF roll-on/roll-off (RO/RO) ships homeported at the Port of Beaumont as a refuge.

The word was passed at a Jefferson County disaster planning meeting and soon officials from half a dozen local cities looked forward to riding out the storm aboard the *Capes Victory* and *Vincent*.

"I'd much rather be aboard this ship than in that building the rest of the firemen are in," said Beaumont Fireman T.J. Thornton on the *Cape Vincent* referring to a tall downtown Beaumont office building where most of his colleagues had been evacuated. "This ship can generate its own power, the lights will be on, and they fed me a good meal tonight. When those guys in that building lose power, it's going to be cold and dark."

Many RRF ships like the *Cape Victory* and *Cape Vincent* are RO/RO ships with large hydraulic ramps that enable trucks, tanks, and other heavy-duty vehicles to be driven onto the ships and parked on decks that look like large steel parking garages.

As the first cloud bands of Hurricane Rita ominously loomed on the horizon, Beaumont city maintenance crews drove aboard the ships with all manner of street repair, water, utility, and debris clean-up vehicles. A couple local cities brought rental trucks reportedly containing important city hall records. The cities of Nederland, Groves, and Port Neches brought dozens of fire and rescue vehicles. The Jefferson



RRF crew "parking" emergency-response vehicles aboard the *Cape Vincent*.

Photo by Ralph J. Ortolano, Jr., USN (RC)

County Sheriff's Department and the Port of Beaumont Police arrived with dozens more vehicles and rescue boats on trailers. A few private emergency services also sought refuge on the *Cape Vincent* and *Cape Victory* for five ambulances and three fire trucks.

Port of Beaumont Police Officer Renee Utley brought 17 police dogs, and the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department brought another six, including several cadaver sniffing dogs.

"When this is over, I'm going to cook you all a big barbeque," said Officer Utley with emotion to crew members and Maritime Administration staff aboard the *Cape Vincent*. "You all are really the greatest for helping us like this."

As word of the shipboard refuge spread, several news crews arrived to document the scene as fire and police vehicles lined the wharf with officers and firemen awaiting their turns to drive aboard.

As the winds picked up, swirls of dust stung the eyes of people waiting on the docks. The first drops of rain started to fall, and the leaves of the trees began to turn upwards.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Department wheeled two police helicopters aboard for search and reconnaissance after the storm. As the winds approached 40 miles per hour, the captains of the two ships gave the order to pull up the ramps before the wind speed prevented them from doing so.

Soon afterward, the rain was pelting ever stronger and the first responders of Jefferson County sat safely aboard their steel versions of Noah's Arks. They were prepared to ride out the storm surge and wait for the storm to pass so they could drive off the ships and rescue the less fortunate.

## U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Visits RRF Ship in New Orleans

By Bill Cahill, Office of Ship Operations



*U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta (Center) talking to USCG COTP CAPT Frank Paskewick (in blue uniform) beside the MARAD RRF ship Diamond State in the Port of New Orleans on September 14, after announcing: "I want the people of New Orleans to know that we are going to help you rebuild, and that includes repairing damaged transportation systems so New Orleans can get moving again."*

*Photo by Dee Varshney, Acting Region Director, Central Region*

On September 14, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta traveled to New Orleans to announce the first installment of federal funding and the deployment of additional resources to repair damage inflicted by Hurricane Katrina on the area's transportation systems.

"I want the people of New Orleans to know that we are going to help you rebuild, and that includes repairing damaged transportation systems so New Orleans can get moving again," Secretary Mineta said.

Secretary Mineta, who had initiated the unprecedented activation of U.S. Maritime Administration-owned Ready Reserve Force (RRF) ships to assist in the recovery effort, visited the port facilities of New Orleans and toured the RRF ship *Diamond State*. The *Diamond State* is specially configured to offload container ships in damaged or unimproved ports. At the time of the Secretary's visit,

the *Diamond State* was providing electrical power to port facilities and housing 40 port workers.

The U.S. Maritime Administration (MARAD) activated eight ships from the RRF to aid the area's economic recovery by helping to rebuild the infrastructure. MARAD also ordered the release of three state maritime academy training ships to house a total of over 1,000 relief workers, port employees, stevedores, and petroleum industry workers—people with skills and abilities critical to vital recover efforts.

The Secretary was accompanied by the director of the port, Gary LaGrange, and several members of the press. A press conference was held on the open deck of the ship where the Secretary and port director praised the quick response by MARAD and the dedication of the ship's master and crew.

### MARAD Update

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**Publisher**

**John Jamian**

**Managing Editor**

**Susan Clark**

**Editor**

**Ella Thomas**

*Continued from Page 2*

Meanwhile, the Department of Transportation (DOT) requested permission of the Department of Defense (DOD) to use the RRF vessels, normally kept for DOD's use as strategic sealift vessels, for humanitarian missions. DOD granted its permission on September 2. MARAD notified the ship managers of Crowley Liner Services and Pacific Gulf Marine to prepare the *Wright* and *Diamond State* for the same humanitarian missions as the school ships. Paul Gilmour, Chief, Division of Ship Maintenance and Repair, coordinated activation issues with regions, ship managers, and general agents.

All hands diligently strove to activate the ships, and to think ahead with respect to what types of relief materiel would be required. Potable water in 5,000 gallon containers and portable cots were added. People even forecasted that rescue efforts would turn into a long-term-relief effort and provided a portable office.

The MARAD Office of Ship Operations offered FEMA its maritime experience and knowledge of vessel capabilities. MARAD personnel from the Central Region were assigned duty at FEMA field offices to help coordinate maritime interests. Susan Schaefer was assigned to Region 6, Tom Mackey to Region 4, and later following Hurricane Rita, Michael Luzinski to the FEMA office in Austin, Texas. At Headquarters, Adrian Jordan became the FEMA coordinator. Many other personnel helped with efforts at U.S. Coast Guard offices and state and local parishes within Louisiana, Mississippi, and later Texas. Kevin Tokarski, Chief, Division of Operations Support, headed the command response from MARAD's Operations Center. Every day, MARAD Central Region personnel and others in the affected area kept Headquarters abreast of the latest developments. Kevin spoke to 20 call-in lines every day, including weekends, for more than a month, listening to each MARAD employee's concerns and providing status reports to both MARAD management and the Department. According to Kevin, "Without those who just kept going without much thought to sleep or recompense and particularly to their families who let them concentrate on

this [Katrina/Rita], we would not have been able to achieve what we did. I've had teams of people, including the Navy reservists, coming up to the plate and far exceeding normal expectations."

Within two weeks after Hurricane Katrina, the Mississippi River brought up the first commercial containership to unload, and recovery efforts were underway, only to be sidetracked by another hurricane – Rita.

Rita took direct aim at the Beaumont Reserve Fleet (BRF), with the eye of

*Cape Vincent*, since it was nearby and would make first response easier. MARAD said yes. The next day, there were 15 fire trucks ready to go aboard. Crews on the *Cape Vincent* and *Cape Victory* loaded them all and discharged them when the storm had passed.

This time, return to the BRF was a phased event. There is not, even today, enough electricity and housing to meet the needs of MARAD employees who were attempting to return to work. The fleet itself spent three days rounding up LASH barges that were loose in the Neches River. Thirty-one were



**Part of MARAD's Watch Team at a daily briefing session with Deputy Maritime Administrator John Jamian (front row: third from left) and other MARAD staff in the MARAD Operations Center located in the DOT Crisis Management Center.**

*Photo by Ella Thomas*

the hurricane passing over Beaumont. Again, Headquarters stood up a weekend watch. Again, the lives of Central Region personnel were thrown into disruption, homes damaged, personnel scattered to families throughout the US, and again, personnel began the regrouping and call-in procedures. However, this time local emergency-response personnel had a better appreciation for MARAD vessels.

A local sheriff asked if he could store his county's fire engines aboard the

hard aground on the banks around the fleet, one sunk, and one was partially sunk. MARAD's National Defense Reserve Fleet vessels anchored together shifted slightly and will have to be restored to their original positions, but the channel was not blocked.

As Bill Cahill, Acting Director, Office of Ship Operations, said on more than one occasion, "We just did what we do all the time. We got the job done together."



## First Day Back

Dee Varshney, Acting Region Direction, Central Region

*Note: Acting Central Region Director Dee Varshney and other MARAD Central Region staff were evacuated from New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina, and set up office in Port Arthur, Texas. They evacuated Port Arthur because of Hurricane Rita. This is Dee's story about the first day back.*



*Emergency-response personnel resting aboard one of the decks of the Cape Victory.*

*Photo by Ralph J. Otolano, Jr., USN (RC)*

The day after Rita blew through, Matthew "Mac" McNally, Staff Shipping Representative; CDR Ralph Otolano, MMROCH Unit 420; and I visited MARAD's Port Arthur Office to assess the damage incurred by Hurricane Rita. Power was out and puddles of water were everywhere. The roof of the building seemed to have been damaged.

Earlier, in preparation for Hurricane Rita, we had removed almost every piece of electronic equipment, including the huge color printer, from the office and packed it in a van for safekeeping aboard the *Cape Victory* during and after the storm.

After leaving the Port Arthur Office, we managed to get to the Holiday Inn in Port Arthur where we had been holed up since Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans. We wanted to pick up our clothes and belongings to take to the *Cape Victory* since the hotel was being evacuated. The hotel had lost all power

and there was no running water. The roof had been blown off in patches. The hotel manager and a guest in the hotel volunteered to take care of our Port Arthur Office mascot fish RDO (short for Regular Day Off) until we could find a more suitable temporary home for him.

We then drove to the Beaumont Reserve Fleet (BRF) in the Port of Beaumont. We had to dodge fallen poles, power lines, and occasionally had to drive in the wrong direction to avoid flooded streets and highways. Fortunately for us, there was a police cruiser in front of us. We could not get to the BRF fleet because the power was down and the gates could not be opened.

Foiled at our attempts to get to the BRF, we drove back to the Holiday Inn. While there, we assisted a guest who was stranded there. She wanted to see her house, but was afraid to drive on her own. She followed us to her house, and found the house was in good condition. She could not stay in the house due to the curfew, so she followed us to the *Cape Vincent* where she spent the afternoon.

The gates to the BRF were now open, and after dropping our new friend off at the *Cape Vincent*, we were able to get to the *Cape Victory* around 1:30 p.m. We received word that four LASH barges had broken free. Two were aground on a bank and two were sighted near Sun Oil Terminal's Dock 5. We were able to get in touch with MORAN tugs that assisted the *Capes Victory* and *Vincent* through the hurricane the previous night. MORAN Towing provided one tug around 5:00 p.m. to go and round up the loose barges. I went with one of the Navy reservists on the tug. The tug's crew was exhausted from the previous night's work, and they needed some rest, so we returned to the ships.

The Captains of *Capes Victory* and *Vincent* were most gracious hosts, and made all of us feel at home. All in all, a fairly routine day. What made returning to the ships worthwhile was the RRF crews' pets that were evacuated before the hurricane. The dogs sat in the conference rooms and, no matter when we returned, greeted us with great affection.

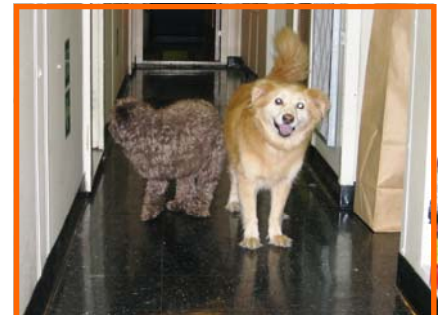
I have the best of the best helping me write a good story. MARAD and its employees can take great pride in the way MARAD assets were used to help the community here.

*Note: RDO is alive and well residing aboard the Cape Vincent until the Port Arthur Office is up and running. Plans are in the works for a big homecoming celebration for RDO.*



*The crew of Moran Towing Co. tug Mary Moran and crew members from MARAD RRF ships Cape Florida and Cape Victory wrangle barges cast adrift in the Neches River under the shadow of former U.S. Navy aircraft carrier Oriskany at the Beaumont Reserve Fleet following Hurricane Rita.*

*Photo by Louis Effa, Office of Chief Information Officer*



*Two evacuees safely aboard one of the Capes.*

## ***Training Ship Empire State Deployed to Support Gulf Coast Recovery Operations***

By Bill McDonald, North Atlantic Region



*MARAD Senior Advisor for Maritime Policy Kevin Krick, center: left, joined SUNY Maritime College Acting President VADM John Craine, USN (Ret.), and North Atlantic Region Director Robert F. McKeon, center: right, at a recent departure ceremony for the SUNY Maritime College Training Ship *Empire State*. The vessel will provide emergency berthing to port workers and petroleum industry employees during Gulf Coast recovery operations.*

*Photo Courtesy of SUNY Maritime College*

On September 10, the Maritime Administration's Senior Advisor for Maritime Policy Kevin Krick and North Atlantic Region Director Robert McKeon joined State University of New York (SUNY) Maritime College Acting President VADM John Craine, USN (Ret.), on campus for a departure ceremony for the Training Ship *Empire State*, which is providing emergency berthing to port workers and petroleum industry employees engaged in restarting U.S. oil production and transport operations on the Gulf Coast.

The training vessel is providing berthing for 625 ConocoPhillips employees, and carries on board 37

galley workers providing food service 22 hours per day. In a spirit of friendly cooperation, approximately 35 Midshipmen from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York, joined Maritime Cadets from SUNY Maritime College to help provision the vessel prior to its sailing. A news team from Channel 12, a local cable station, recorded the proceedings and interviewed participating officials. Mr. Krick discussed MARAD's ongoing efforts to deploy maritime assets and personnel in support of Hurricane Katrina recovery operations.



## Images from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita



Secretary Mineta thanks Brian Blower for his contributions to DOT's Hurricane Katrina evacuation and relief efforts at the Joint Inter-Agency Operations Center at the Moissant International Airport in New Orleans.



Bird's eye view from the Capes Kennedy and Knox of a warehouse fire upriver from the Poland Street Wharf after Hurricane Katrina.



Left to Right: MARAD ships Wright, Sirius, and Diamond State in the Port of New Orleans.



Bob Babin, Central Region, and Steve Jackson, South Atlantic Region, catching a quick bite aboard one of the Beaumont Reserve Fleet patrol boats during Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.



The Empire State VI is shown alongside her home away from home in Jesuit Bend, Louisiana, providing housing for refinery workers, security, and medical personnel as they rebuild the infrastructure of the third largest oil refinery in Louisiana.